

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, due to pressing personal business, I was unable to vote on the conference report on S. 1124, the Department of Defense Authorization bill.

Although this conference report did make important changes from the version which was vetoed by President Clinton, there remain serious policy issues such as the proposed restrictions of overseas abortion and the language requiring the discharge of HIV-positive personnel, about which I continue to have serious concerns. As such, had I been present, I would have voted "no".

GILROY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
HONORS MAN OF THE YEAR TOM
CARR

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the Gilroy Chamber of Commerce in honoring Mr. Tom Carr of Gilroy, CA, for his extraordinary volunteer efforts. Mr. Carr has been named "Man of the Year" after also receiving "Volunteer of the Year" recognition from the city of Gilroy and the "Elk's Distinguished Citizenship Award."

What is so noteworthy about Mr. Carr is the pride that he takes in his community and his dedication toward keeping his city safe and beautiful. I am aware that Mr. Carr spends on average several hours each day eradicating graffiti from throughout the city. His work sends a signal, loud and clear, that we will not allow taggers to take over our neighborhoods. That is important, because fighting graffiti is a vital step toward keeping our streets safe.

Likewise, Mr. Carr has been a staunch supporter of our local police department by helping to raise funds for special projects that enable the department to better serve the public.

Mr. Speaker, on February 2, 1996, at the Gilroy Chamber of Commerce's Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner, Mr. Carr will formally receive his award. At this time, I would like to invite my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in saluting this fine community volunteer.

DOD AUTHORIZATION
CONFERENCE REPORT

HON. VIC FAZIO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. FAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise reluctantly in support of the fiscal year 1996 Defense authorization conference report. I would like to

begin by thanking the chairman and the ranking member of the National Security Committee who worked hard to bridge their differences and produce a bill that the President will sign into law.

I would like to point out that I voted against this conference report back in December because of the objectionable language governing national missile defense policy and the restrictions on the President's constitutional prerogatives to make foreign policy. My vote against the initial conference report was the first time in my congressional career that I cast a "no" vote on a defense bill, be it authorization or appropriations. Moreover, the reservations and the objections to the original conference report by the respected Senator from Georgia, Mr. NUNN, cast serious doubt on the wisdom of enacting such restrictive and potentially harmful language.

As President Clinton said it last night, "since the dawn of the nuclear age, there is not a single Russian missile pointed at the United States and North Korea has frozen its dangerous nuclear weapons program." We have accomplished that because both Democratic and Republican administrations have worked tirelessly to ratify the START Treaty which significantly reduced the nuclear stockpile between the former Soviet Union and the United States. And now we are on the verge of further reducing weapons of mass destruction by embracing START II.

We cannot and should not do anything to endanger the prospects for ratification of START II. I voted against the conference report in December precisely because it amounted to an anticipatory breach of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Further, the language contained in the bill would have had a significant impact on Russian consideration of the START II Treaty which will reduce Russian nuclear weapons by 25 percent.

I am pleased to see that the language regarding the deployment of a national missile defense system was struck from the bill as well as the language restricting the President's ability to utilize U.S. troops for peacekeeping missions. It is clear by now that for all of the dire predictions and the harsh rhetoric aimed at the President's proposal to send troops to enforce the peace in Bosnia, the President's plan has largely been a success thus far. We have stopped the bloodshed and have ushered in new hope for the future of all Serbs, Muslims, and Croatsians.

While I applaud the compromise that was made with respect to this conference report, I am dismayed that the conference committee neglected to delete the abortion language and the language that discharges those HIV-positive service members.

I think it is important for the Congress to take note that this was the first time in decades, a defense appropriations bill was enacted without an authorization bill being enacted first.

I support the compromise version of the conference report knowing that this bill authorizes more money than I would personally prefer. But given the realities of our current mission in Bosnia, the need to maintain military readiness and move forward with defense conversion efforts, I believe it is important that

we pass this bill and have the President sign it into law.

IN PRAISE OF THE PBS AND MR.
GEORGE COVINGTON

HON. CHARLES WILSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a friend and fellow Texan, Mr. George Covington, on his upcoming appearance on the Public Television series "People in Motion."

George has spent the past 20 years establishing himself as one of this country's most vocal advocates for the millions of Americans with disabilities. He worked for and has been a member of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. He served on the staff of former Speaker Jim Wright as the speaker's disability specialist and for Vice President Dan Quayle, as Special Assistant for Disability Policy. With my office, he designed and implemented the first fully accessible mapping of Capitol Hill and the monuments. This project, the Tactile Capital, provided hand-held braille and table-top scale maps of Washington, DC, that brought our Nation's capital into focus for the first time for millions of visitors with low or no vision.

He is an internationally recognized speaker on universal design, disability rights, and photography. That last entry is particularly noteworthy, because George has been legally blind since birth and now has only 5 percent usable vision. His career has spanned the fields of law, journalism, education, government, and disability civil rights. But he is the first to tell you point blank that he does not want the burden of being "inspirational" to able-bodied people—and add that this is the wish of most people with disabilities.

It is for this reason that George's appearance is so very appropriate and important to a series like "People in Motion." He has spent most of his life fighting negative images, myths, and stereotypes about people with disabilities.

Last year PBS broadcast the first installments of this unique series. In April, PBS stations around the country will air three new episodes of "People in Motion." Like the premier episodes, these seek to break through the standard media representation of people with disabilities, and will help change forever the way most of us see those with a disability. With a census estimate of 49 million Americans falling into this constituency, I suggest that it is important for us to learn more about these fellow citizens.

I want to commend PBS for its commitment to "People in Motion" as well as recognize the important contribution of local public television stations planning to air this series. I urge you to watch this outstanding series, so that we may all applaud the work of people like George Covington and the foresight of PBS programming.